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CONSTITUTION

AND

OTHER DOCUMENTS IN RELATION

TO THE

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OF MISSISSIPPI.



JACKSON:

MISSISSIPPIAN STEAM PRESS PRINT.

1859.

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STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, }
JACKSON, Miss., February 13, 1859. }

Sir: At the last session of the Legislature, the organization of a State Historical Society having been effected for the purpose of collecting and preserving in a durable form the events and relics of the early, as well as contemporaneous history of the State, I would call your attention to the address and appeal of the committee appointed by the President, to solicit the co-operation of the citizens of this State in carrying out the objects of the Society.

I need not assure you that we would be pleased to receive contributions from you, such as are specified in the address; all of which will be carefully preserved in the archives of the Society.

Very Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

BEN. W. SANDERS,

Cor. Sec'y State Historical Society.

ORGANIZATION

OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

At a meeting held in the Representative Chamber of the State Capitol, on the 9th of November 1858, for the purpose of organizing a Historical Society for the State,

On motion, Col. B. L. C. WAILES was called to the Chair, and V. W. THOMPSON appointed Secretary.

On motion of Mr. SANDERS, it was ordered that the Chairman appoint a committee of three to report the draft of a Constitution for the Society, and

Messrs. B. W. SANDERS, WM. CAREY CRANE, and L. H. MILLIKEN, were appointed said committee.

And after a conference between the members thereof, Mr. SANDERS was instructed to report a Constitution, which, on motion, was received and adopted, and the members present subscribed their names thereto.

On motion of Mr. MILLIKEN,

It was ordered that the chairman appoint a committee of five to select and recommend a list of officers for the Society,

Whereupon the Chair appointed Messrs. MILLIKEN, WM. CAREY CRANE, Dr. THOS. J. CATCHINGS, DEWITT C. QUINN, and W. H. ANDERSON said committee,

And being so instructed, Mr. MILLIKEN reported the following list, which being approved, the gentlemen named therein, were declared to be the officers of the Society until the next biennial election, on the second Monday in November 1860:

For President—Col. B. L. C. WAILES.

1st Vice President—REV. WM. CAREY CRANE.

2d “ “ HON. W. S. BARRY.

3d “ “ HON. ISAAC N. DAVIS.

4th “ “ HON. JNO. J. PETTUS.

5th “ “ HON. D. W. HURST.

Recording Secretary—L. Minnms, Esq.

Corresponding Secretary and Librarian—B. W. Sanders.

Treasurer—Wirt Adams, Esq.

Executive Committee—Hons. C. P. Smith, E. Barksdale, Thos. J. Catchings, George S. Yerger, H. T. Ellett.

On motion it was ordered,

That Rev. Wm. Croes Crane, Rev. L. H. Milliken, and Thos. J. Wharton, Esq., be appointed a committee to prepare an address to the people of the State, soliciting their co-operation with objects of the Society.

In compliance with the requirements of the Constitution, the President appointed the Rev. WM. CAREY CRANE to deliver an address, and the Hon. C. P. SMITH and Col. J. F. H. CLAIBORNE to contribute essays on the history of the State at the next stated meeting of the Society.

On motion of Dr. CATCHINGS, it was

Resolved, That the Executive Committee during the recess be requested to correspond in relation to the objects of the Society, with such persons as they may deem expedient and proper, and that they be authorized in the mean time to make arrangements for printing, and to cause to be published such portions of the contributions which may be made to them as they may deem of historic value, and to lay such correspondence before the Society at next meeting.

The draft of a charter being submitted and approved, on motion, it was

Resolved, That the President appoint a committee of three to procure the passage of an act of incorporation.

Whereupon, Dr. CATCHINGS, Hon. BEVERLY MATTHEWS, and Col. J. H. HORNE, were appointed said committee.

On motion, it was ordered that the proceedings of this meeting be published in the papers of this city, and that such others in the State as are favorable to the objects of the Society be requested to copy the same.

On motion, the Society then adjourned until the next stated meeting.

B. L. C. WAILES, President.

VICTOR W. THOMPSON, Secretary.

AN APPEAL IN BEHALF OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

A Society bearing the above title was organized in this city on the 9th ult., and the undersigned were appointed a committee to address the people of the State in explanation of its plans and objects, and to solicit their co-operation in the important work which has thus been undertaken.

Indifference in regard to their past history is a reproach to any people. It argues either that they are ashamed of their antecedents, or unmindful of their ancestors. That they have no memories of the past worth cherishing; or else no hearts to feel, and no manliness to avow and perpetuate their debt of gratitude to the men of toil, and valor, and self-denial, who now rest from the labors whereby their posterity has been so greatly benefited.

As Mississippians, we have, apart from our common heritage in the great Republic, a history of our own, replete with interest and instruction; and among the fathers of our State were men whose names and characters may well be dwelt upon with patriotic pride. Nor can we accept the alternative, that those who are now reaping where they once sowed, those who are the favored occupants of the fair land, which they explored and settled, when it was yet a wilderness, are a thankless race, or forgetful of those to whom they owe their goodly heritage.

It is not in Mississippi that State feeling and State pride are wanting. It is not here that men who have served us faithfully are forgotten because they are dead. No! the hearts of our people are true, and their memories faithful; and we are well assured they only need to be reminded that what is engraven in the memories and the hearts of the present generation, should have also a permanent record for generations yet unborn. There may have been neglect, but not indifference; and now that the opportunity is offered them of discharging this sacred duty, the earnest appeal that the materials which elucidate our early history may not be suffered to perish, but be gathered and garnered with filial care, will not be in vain. Let us, fellow-citizens, preserve from oblivion now while we may, the names and deeds of the hardy pioneers who laid the foundation of our noble State, and of all those who by their wisdom and their valor

have since contributed to its welfare and renown. Already much has been lost. The first settlers are all gone, and their immediate descendants are rapidly passing away. Unless they are now secured, the authentic history of the State will soon be beyond our reach. The mementoes of the Indian occupants of our soil are scattered over the whole State with none to gather them. The extinct Natchez tribe has come to be regarded as almost a myth. The notices of European explorations, commencing with DeSoto's in 1542, and of European settlements, commencing with LaSalle in 1681, are very obscure. The influence of the French and Spanish *regimes* upon our early history is almost unknown, and the very annals of our territorial government are in danger of being lost.

Is it not then time, high time, that this work should be entered upon and prosecuted with the utmost vigor? Should not all who can, lend us their aid in collecting interesting facts derived from original and authentic sources—thus contributing to our history what else will remain unwritten. And while we offer a safe depository for whatever relates to the olden men and the olden times, as well as to contemporaneous history, may we not hope that a spirit of research will be awakened throughout our borders, which will leave as little as possible of the origin and progress of this State to future conjecture. States much younger than our own, and far inferior to ours in historic interest, have already made great advancement in this work. Wisconsin in particular, though as a State thirty-one years younger than Mississippi, has set us an example of enlightened and patriotic interest well worthy of our imitation. Her Legislature has had the wisdom and liberality to make an annual appropriation to her Historical Society, through which great and lasting benefits have already been secured. In three years the Society has collected a valuable historic library of 3,000 volumes, exclusive of a greater number of pamphlets, with many unbound documents and files of newspapers and periodicals—to say nothing of its cabinet, and the gallery of portraits of its pioneers, and early public men. The Society also publishes annually, a large volume of valuable reports and collections.

We invoke our fellow-citizens to aid us in doing likewise; we cordially invite them to become members of the Society, by the annual payment of one dollar, or life members by the single payment of twenty dollars. We ask for contributions and endowments; indeed, for whatever may facilitate

the purposes of our organization, and perpetuate the honorable memories of the past.

The particular objects of collection desired by the Society are as follows :

1. Manuscript statements and narratives of pioneer settlers—old letters and journals relative to the early history and settlement of Mississippi; biographical notices of eminent citizens, deceased; and facts illustrative of our Indian tribes, their history, characteristics, sketches of their prominent chiefs, orators and warriors, together with contributions of Indian implements, dress ornaments and curiosities.

2. Files of newspapers, books, pamphlets, college catalogues, minutes of ecclesiastical conventions, conferences and synods, and other publications relating to this State, and to the territory of which it once formed a part.

3. Drawings and descriptions of our ancient mounds and fortifications, their size, representation and locality, together with information respecting any ancient coins or other curiosities found in Mississippi.

4. Indian geographical names of streams and localities in this State, with their signification.

5. Books of all kinds, and especially such as relate to American history, travels, and biography in general, and the Southwest in particular, family genealogies, old magazines, pamphlets, maps, historical manuscripts, autographs of distinguished names, coins, medals, portraits, statuary and engravings.

6. We solicit from historical societies and other learned bodies, that interchange of books and other materials by which the usefulness of institutions like this are essentially enhanced.

7. The Society particularly begs the favor and compliment of authors and publishers to present, with their autographs, copies of their respective works for its library.

8. Editors and publishers of newspapers, magazines and reviews, will confer a lasting favor on the Society by contributing their publications regularly for its library; or at least such numbers as may contain articles bearing upon

Mississippi history, biography, geography or antiquities, all of which will be carefully preserved for binding.

WM. CROES CRANE,
L. H. MILLIKEN,
THOMAS J. WHARTON.

Jackson, Nov. 26, 1858.

N. B.—Subscriptions and donations of money should be forwarded to Wirt Adams, Esq., Treasurer, Jackson.

Any articles designed for the society may be sent directly to the Corresponding Secretary and Librarian, B. W. Sanders Esq., Jackson.

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

The subscribers, convened at the city of Jackson, the 9th of November, A. D. 1858, fully impressed with the necessity of an effort to rescue from impending oblivion the perishable memorials of the history of our State, and of collecting and preserving, for the use of the historian, the materials which yet exist, in desultory and fugitive publications, or the more precarious form of manuscript, or which have been transmitted by tradition, do hereby constitute themselves an association to be known as the "HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSISSIPPI," and do ordain and adopt the following as a Constitution for their government:

ARTICLE 1. This Society shall be established at the city of Jackson, and its officers shall consist of a President, five Vice Presidents, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Librarian, and a Treasurer, to be chosen biennially by the members of the Society present at the stated meeting in November in each alternate year, and who shall hold their offices, and perform the duties pertaining thereto, until their successors shall be elected.

ART. 2. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all the meetings of the Society, to appoint all committees not otherwise provided for, to cause all laws or orders of the Society to be executed, and to promote as far as practicable, the welfare and interests of the Association. It shall also be his duty at the first stated meeting succeeding his election to deliver an inaugural address, and at each regular meeting he shall appoint one or more members of the Society to deliver addresses or to contribute essays relating to the history of the State.

ART. 3. In the absence of the President, the Senior Vice President, present, shall preside in his stead, and in case the office shall become vacant by death or resignation, he shall perform the duties of presiding officer until the next regular election by the Society. In the absence of both the President and Vice Presidents, the Society shall, at each meeting, appoint a Chairman pro tem.

ART. 4. It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to provide a substantial and well bound book, in which this Constitution shall be transcribed, and the minutes of the proceedings of the Society shall be carefully and accurately recorded.

ART. 5. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to conduct all the correspondence under the direction of the Society, and to preserve full and correct copies of all letters written or received by him, in a suitable Letter Book to be kept by him for that purpose.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of the Librarian to take charge of and protect the apartment or building which may be provided for the meeting of the Society, and to preserve therein all books, papers, memoirs, maps and manuscripts contributed to and belonging to said Society, and to keep a catalogue thereof, and a list of all donations or contributions to the Association; and the duties of Corresponding Secretary and Librarian may be performed by the same person.

ART. 7. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to collect all dues and receive all contributions to the Society, and to preserve the same for its use, and to pay all orders drawn on him by the authority of the Society. He shall keep a strict and business-like account of all receipts and disbursements, and shall make a full and clear report of the same, at the stated semi-annual meetings, or whenever required by the Society.

ART. 8. The Minutes, Letter-Book, Treasurer's accounts and the Library shall at all times be open to the inspection of the members of the Society.

ART. 9. There shall be one stated meeting of the Society in each year, to wit: on the second Monday of November, and the President may call a special meeting, by giving thirty days notice, in the paper published by the printer of the State in Jackson, whenever, in his opinion, the interests of the Society shall require it, or whenever requested to do so in writing by five members thereof.

ART. 10. Twelve members shall constitute a quorum to do business, and new members may be proposed and elected at any stated meeting at which a quorum shall be present, but five dissenting votes shall be sufficient to exclude any person put in nomination.

Each member of the Society shall pay annually to the Treasurer for the use of the Society the sum of one dollar, and the payment of twenty dollars shall constitute a member for life.

ART. 11. The Society may, at any regular stated meeting, elect honorary and corresponding members who shall not be required to make any pecuniary contribution, and who shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting at which they

may be present. This authority shall at all times be cautiously and prudently exercised, least the honors of the society should come to be undervalued or be unworthily bestowed.

ART. 12. At the first stated meeting in each year the Society shall appoint an Executive Committee, to consist of five members, who shall meet monthly, and discharge such duties as the Society may assign to them during its recess, and they shall act also as a Committee of Publication, and no memoir, essay or contribution to the history of the State, shall be published as having the sanction of the Society, unless submitted to the examination of the said Committee and approved by it.

ART. 13. This Constitution may be altered and amended whenever the Society may deem it necessary ; Provided that no alteration shall be made without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present at two consecutive meetings thereof.

B. L. C. WAILES,
VICTOR W. THOMPSON,
WM. CAREY CRANE,
L. H. MILLIKEN,
D. S. SNODGRASS,
D. E. BURNS,
DeWITT C. QUINN,
JOHN S. CLARK,
A. C. CAPERTON,
BEN. W. SANDERS,
WM. CROES CRANE,
W. H. ANDERSON,
THOS. J. CATCHINGS.

CHARTER OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

AN ACT TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

WHEREAS, it is desirable to collect, preserve, and perpetuate by publication or otherwise, the scattered and perishable memorials, both written and traditional, of our social and political history, and whereas, this office can be performed most efficiently and accurately by an association of individuals, whose attainments, pursuits and opportunities, afford the greatest facilities for the accomplishment of this object, therefore,

SEC. 1. *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Mississippi*, That B. L. C. Wailes, Wm. Carey Crane, W. S. Barry, I. N. Davis, John J. Pettus, D. W. Hurst, L. Mimms, B. W. Sanders, Wirt Adams, C. P. Smith, E. Barksdale, Thos. J. Catchings, Geo. S. Yerger, H. T. Ellett, L. H. Milliken, D. S. Snodgrass, D. E. Burns, DeWitt C. Quinn, John S. Clark, A. C. Caperton, Wm. Croes Crane, Wm. H. Anderson, Beverly Matthews, John H. Horne, V. W. Thompson, and F. A. P. Bernard, be, and they are hereby constituted a body corporate and politic, under the name and style of the Historical Society of Mississippi, and they and their associates, and successors who may hereafter be duly elected members of said Society, shall be capable in law to do and perform all things incident to bodies corporate, both in law and equity, and to receive donations and hold real estate, to the value not exceeding fifty thousand dollars.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted*, That the said Society shall form and establish a Constitution and by-laws for its government, and may alter and amend the same whenever it may be deemed necessary and expedient.

HOUSE AMENDMENT.

Be it further enacted, That the small apartment adjoining the Library on the south, be set apart and appropriated for the use of said Society, and that said room be fitted up for the purpose by the State Librarian, under the direction of the Governor.

SENATE CONTINUED.

SEC. 3. *Be it further enacted*, That the officers and committees of the Society, under the direction and supervision of the Secretary of State, shall have free access to the public archives, for the purpose of making extracts or compila-

tions therefrom, and may publish the same from time to time in the journal of their transactions, or otherwise, as the Society shall direct.

SEC. 4. *Be it further enacted*, That this act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Approved November 17, 1858.

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